

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 SANA 02808 231929Z

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02

SS-15 L-03 H-01 PRS-01 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

/072 W

-----055011 231937Z /42

P 211105Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY SANA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1868

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

SECDEF WASHDC

DIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

CHUSMTM DHAHRAN SA

USCINCEUR

COMIDEASTFOR

S E C R E T SANA 2808

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, YE

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT AL-HAMDY ON TRIBAL SITUATION

REF: SANA 2807

1. SUMMARY: DURING JULY 20 MEETING, PRESIDENT AL-HAMDY DESCRIBED SITUATION IN NORTH IN SAME TERMS AS CHIEF OF STAFF HAD EARLIER DONE (SEE REFTEL) WHILE EMPHASIZING HIS DESIRE NOT TO ALLOW TENSIONS TO ESCALATE. HE EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT LEFTISTS AND SOVIETS MIGHT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF CURRENT TROUBLES AND ASKED USG TO CONVEY INFORMATION RE SITUATION IN NORTH TO SAUDIS SO THAT LATTER MIGHT ALSO EXERT WHATEVER INFLUENCE THEY HAVE ON NORTHERN TRIBAL ELEMENTS. I BELIEVE REQUEST IS REASONABLE AND RECOMMEND THAT EMBASSY JIDDA BE INSTRUCTED TO SO INFORM
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 SANA 02808 231929Z

SAUDIS, WHILE ASKING FOR THEIR HELP. END SUMMARY.

2. DESPITE MY LACK OF PRIOR APPOINTMENT AND HIS OBVIOUSLY BAD COLD, PRESIDENT IBRAHIM MUHAMMAD AL-HAMDY RECEIVED ME LAST NIGHT (JULY 20) IN HIS HOUSE WHERE I WENT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CURRENT TRIBAL TROUBLES IN THE NORTH. AFTER EXPLAINING THE PURPOSE OF THE CALL AND AFTER ASSURING PRESIDENT AL-HAMDY OF

CONTINUED USG SUPPORT FOR HIS EFFORTS TO BUILD A STRONG AND MODERATE GOVERNMENT IN YEMEN, I TOLD HIM WHAT CHIEF OF STAFF AL-GHASHMI HAD EARLIER CONVEYED TO ME ABOUT THE TENSIONS IN THE NORTH AND ASKED HIM TO BRIEF ME AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE ON THE SITUATION IN ORDER THAT I MIGHT BETTER INFORM MY GOVERNMENT. (AL-GHASHMI JOINED US AT THIS TIME BUT DID NOT ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN THE CONVERSATION WHICH ENSUED.)

3. AL-HAMDI EXPRESSED HIS DEEP APPRECIATION FOR MY CALL WHICH, HE SAID, HE INTERPRETED AS A SIGN OF CONTINUED US SUPPORT FOR YEMEN AND FOR YEMEN'S CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. HE THEN WENT ON TO DESCRIBE THE SITUATION IN THE NORTH, IN FAIRLY MUCH THE SAME TERMS AS AL-GHASHMI HAD, WHILE EMPHASIZING THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT HAS NO DESIRE TO ESCALATE THE SITUATION THERE. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, GOVERNMENT TROOPS HAVE BEEN GIVEN INSTRUCTIONS TO FIRE, IF FIRED UPON.

4. AL-HAMDI CONTINUED THAT AT THE PRESENT TIME THE SITUATION IN THE NORTH IS SOMEWHAT CONFUSED BECAUSE MANY, IF NOT MOST OF THE TRIBES, ARE NOT SUPPORTING SHAYKH ABDULLAH AL-AHMAR IN HIS ANTI-GOVERNMENT POLICIES. AL-HAMDI STATED IT IS DIFFICULT, THEREFORE, TO SAY FOR CERTAIN WHETHER THE CURRENT TROUBLES HAVE BEEN CAUSED BY AL-AHMAR OR PERHAPS BY THE ABU LUHUMS WHO ARE TRYING TO BRING ABOUT A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE TRIBES AND THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT BEFORE THE POWER OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT IS FURTHER STRENGTHENED AT THE SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 SANA 02808 231929Z

EXPENSE OF THE DISSIDENTS THERE.

5. AL-HAMDI REITERATED SEVERAL TIMES DURING THE TALK THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE THE SAUDIS ARE BEHIND THE DIFFICULTIES IN THE NORTH AND THAT, MOREOVER, DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO RIYADH THE SAUDIS EXPRESSED A GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT IN YEMEN IS TRYING TO DO. AL-HAMDI CONTINUED THAT THE SAUDIS STILL HAVE INFLUENCE AMONG THE TRIBAL SHAYKS IN THE NORTH, HOWEVER, SO THAT MANY OF THE LATTER WOULD BE FURTHER DISCOURAGED FROM ANTI-GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES IF THEY WOULD BE TOLD BY THE SAUDIS TO 590. AL-HAMDI ADMITTED THAT SAUDI INFLUENCE IS NOT TOTAL AND OPPORTUNISTS LIKE THE ABU LUHUMS WOULD DOUBTLESS NOT HEED THE SAUDI ADVICE.

6. AL-HAMDI SAID THAT WHILE HE IS NOT AT THE PRESENT TIME CONCERNED ABOUT THE DETERIORATION OF THE SITUATION IN THE NORTH, HE SAID HE IS CONCERNED THAT THE LEFTIST AND SOVIETS WILL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION. AL-HAMDI CONTINUED THAT, MOREOVER, THE SOVIETS WILL NOW NO DOUBT BEGIN TO PUT PRESSURE ON HIM THROUGH THEIR FRIENDS IN THE YEMENI OFFICER CORPS TO ACCEPT SOVIET MILITARY EQUIPMENT, WHICH THE SOVIETS WILL POINT OUT WILL BE AVAILABLE

IMMEDIATELY TO PROVIDE THE YEMENI GOVERNMENT WITH THE WHEREWITHAL TO NOT ONLY TO DEFEND ITSELF BUT ALSO TO ESTABLISH THE AUTHORITY OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT EVERYWHERE THROUGHOUT YEMEN. AL-HAMDI NOTED IN THIS LATTER CONNECTION THAT DURING THE DAY MANY OFFICERS HAD APPROACHED AL-GHASHMI URGING HIM TO MOVE IMMEDIATELY AGAINST THE NORTH. AL-HAMDI OPINED THAT THE SOVIETS MIGHT WELL BE BEHIND THESE OFFICERS IN ORDER TO EMBARRASS THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT.

7. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION AS TO WHAT IF ANYTHING THE USG MIGHT BE ABLE TO DO, AL-HAMDI SAID THAT IT WOULD BE SUFFICIENT IF THE USG WOULD INFORM THE SAUDIS OF THE SITUATION IN THE NORTH AND URGE ON THEM TO SUPPORT THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, ESPECIALLY BY TELLING THEIR TRIBAL FRIENDS IN THE NORTH TO
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 SANA 02808 231929Z

COOPERATED WITH THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. AL-HAMDI HASTENED TO ADD THAT HE DID NOT WANT TO APPEAR THAT HE WAS COMPLAINING AGAINST THE SAUDIS OR THAT HE WANTED US TO INTERCEDE WITH THE SAUDIS, NOTING THAT HE HAD ALREADY SPOKEN TO THE SAUDI MILITARY ATTACHE WHO HAS BEEN COOPERATIVE. HE SAID THAT THUS FAR THE SAUDI ATTITUDE HAS BEEN GOOD AND HE ONLY HOPED THEY WOULD MAKE THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT EVEN CLEARER WITH THE TRIBES IN THE NORTH. AL-HAMDI ASKED SPECIFICALLY THAT WE NOT RPT NOT TELL THE SAUDIS THAT WE ARE TALKING TO THEM AT THE REQUEST OF AL-HAMDI OF OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT.

8. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH BECAUSE OF THE COLD AL-HAMDI VOICE KEPT GIVING OUT ON HIM, HE MADE HIS POINTS IN A DELIBERATE AND LOW-KEY MANNER. HE DID NOT APPEAR AS CONCERNED ABOUT THE SITUATION AS AL-GHASHMI HAD EARLIER IN THE DAY. I BELIEVE, THEREFORE, THAT AL-HAMDI WILL DO EVERYTHING TO AVOID FURTHER ESCALATION BUT HE WILL NOT FLINCH FROM A SHOW-DOWN IF FORCED INTO ONE. HIS CONCERN OVER THE LEFTISTS AND SOVIETS APPEARED TO BE GENUINE AND I HAVE HEARD THAT THE SOVIET CHARGE HAS BEEN TRYING TO SEE AL-HAMDI FOR PAST TWO DAY. IT MUST NOT BE FORGOTTEN THAT SOVIETS STILL POSSESS SOME EFFECTIVE ASSETS IN THE YEMENI ARMY OFFICER CORPS WHICH I HAVE NO DOUBT THEY WILL USE IF IT APPEARS THAT THEY CAN PUT AL-HAMDI ON THE SPOT AND DISCREDIT HIM AND HIS MODERATE SUPPORTERS IN THE REGIME.

9. RECOMMENDATION: I BELIEVE THAT AL-HAMDI'S REQUEST TO CONVEY TO THE SAUDIS THE INFORMATION CONCERNING THE NORTH IS A REASONABLE ONE. I WOULD, THEREFORE, RECOMMEND THAT THE DEPARTMENT AUTHORIZE OUR EMBASSY IN JIDDA WITHOUT REFERRING TO AL-HAMDI'S REQUEST TO A) INFORM THE SAUDIS ABOUT THE SITUATION IN THE NORTH, USING INFORMATION PASSED TO ME BY
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 05 SANA 02808 231929Z

AL-GHASHMI IN REFTTEL, (B) EXPRESS OUR CONCERN TO THE SAUDIS
THAT THE SITUATION I THE NORTH NOT GET OUT OF HAND LEST
IT ENCOURAGE THE LEFTIST AND SOVIETS IN YEMEN AND (C) ADVISE
THE SAUDIS TO EXERT ANY INFLUENCE THEY HAVE OVER THE TRIBAL
SHAYKHS IN THE NORTH TO SETTLE THEIR DIFFERENCES WITH THE
CENTRAL GOVERNMENT IN A PEACEFUL MANNER.
SCOTES

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESIDENT, INTERVENTION, TRIBAL DISORDERS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 21-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977SANA02808
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770263-1028
Format: TEL
From: SANA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770733/aaaabcfj.tel
Line Count: 182
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 7ddbea65-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 SANA 2807
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1789715
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESIDENT AL-HAMDI ON TRIBAL SITUATION
TAGS: PINT, PINS, YE, (AL-HAMDI, IBRAHIM)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/7ddbea65-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009